

## What is claimed is:

A method of making an electret, which method comprises:

condensing vapor from an atmosphere of a controlled environment onto a dielectric article to form a condensate thereon; and then

drying the article.

The method of claim 1, wherein the electret exhibits a persistent electric

charge.

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The method of claim 1, wherein the dielectic article comprises a 3. nonconductive polymeric material.

The method of claim 1, wherein the condensate includes a polar liquid. 4.

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5. The method of claim 1, wherein the controlled environment further comprises a liquid, and the method further comprises:

placing the article in the liquid before condensing the vapor; and

decreasing the pressure on the atmosphere such that at least a portion of the liquid evaporates into the atmosphere

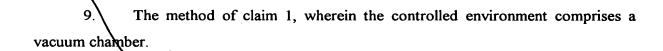
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of condensing the vapor comprises increasing the pressure on the atmosphere such that the vapor condenses on the article.

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- The method of claim 1, wherein the step of condensing comprises placing an 7. article at a temperature T1 in contact with the vapor, the vapor being at a temperature T2, where T1 is sufficiently less than T2 such that the vapor condenses on the article.
- 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of condensing comprises an 30 adiabatic expansion.

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- 10. The method of claim 4, wherein the polar liquid is an aqueous liquid.
- 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the condensate consists essentially of water.
- 12. The method of claim 1, wherein the condensate is selected from the group consisting of acetone, methanol, ethanol, liquid carbon dioxide, butanol, or a combination thereof.
  - 13. The method of claim 1, wherein the condensate comprises a fluorocarbon.
  - 14. The method of claim 1, wherein the article is nonwoven fibrous web.
- 15. The method of claim 11, wherein the nonwoven fibrous web comprises microfibers.
  - 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the microfibers are melt blown.
- 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the meltblown microfibers comprise polypropylene, poly-(4-methyl-1-pentene) or a combination thereof.

The method of claim 1, wherein the controlled environment further comprises a liquid, and the method further comprises

altering a first property of the environment such that at least a portion of the liquid evaporates into the atmosphere;

altering a second property of the environment such that the vapor condenses on the surface of the article.

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19. The method of claim 18, wherein the first property is selected from the group consisting of pressure, volume or temperature, or a combination thereof, and wherein the second property is selected from the group consisting of pressure, volume or temperature, or a combination thereof.

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- 20. The method of claim 19, wherein the first property comprises pressure and e second property comprises pressure.
- 10 The method of claim 19, wherein the first property comprises volume and the second property comprises volume.
  - 22. The method of claim 1, wherein the electret exhibits persistent electric charge, wherein the dielectric article comprises a nonconductive polymeric material, and wherein the condensate comprises a polar liquid.

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- 23. A filter comprising the electret of claim 16.
- 24. A respirator comprising the filter of claim 23.

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